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# CIA plan revealed: Mine 3 Nicaragua harbors to halt the flow of arms

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WASHINGTON — The CIA reportedly asked for detailed maps of three Nicaraguan ports as part of a covert plan to mine the harbors and intercept Soviet and Cuban weapons and supplies.

The agency may have planned to give the mines to anti-Sandinista rebels who intended to sabotage one of the ports in May when four Soviet ships were docked there.

A senior administration official said the maps, which included detailed information on "depths and channels," were urgently requested from the Defense Mapping Agency in early March.

Several sources said the rebels had planned the sabotage operation for mid-May but at the last minute the United States refused to provide the mines.

Intelligence sources and Pentagon, State Department and White House officials corroborated the account.

The sources disagreed over how far the planning had gone.

But they said there was little doubt that the CIA, prohibited by law from doing anything directly to overthrow the Sandinista regime, is broadly interpreting the law. The law permits covert acts aimed at interdicting arms shipped from Nicaragua to leftist rebels in El Salvador.

There also is strong evidence that the CIA, possibly with the help of the Army's ultra-secret Intelligence Support Activity (ISA), has far more plans than previously disclosed to support the rapidly growing "secret army" of 12,000 to 15,000 anti-Sandinista rebels in Nicaragua and neighboring Honduras.

A Pentagon source said that in late February and again in March, a CIA-Defense Department team asked for urgent delivery of the maps for Bluefields, Puerto Cabezas and Corinto, the three ports where Soviet ships regularly unloaded military supplies.

"I didn't know whether they needed them for contingency plans to land (rebel) troops or whether they intended to mine the harbors to keep Soviet and Cuban ships

out," the official said.

The Soviets, according to U.S. officials, have stepped up delivery of armored personnel carriers, multiple rocket launchers, anti-tank guns, East German trucks and field kitchens. The officials said the arms supplies are coming in at about 20,000 tons a year, or double the rate of 1981 and 1982.

A State Department official said the CIA had been approached by one arm of the "Contras," or Nicaraguan counterrevolutionaries based in Honduras and Costa Rica, to obtain underwater explosives to mine one of the harbors.

According to this official, the CIA operation was called off when a Pentagon employee tipped Rep. Clarence Long, D-Md., of the plan. Long is a strong opponent of administration policy in Central America.

Long reportedly conferred with CIA Director William Casey, warning that such a plan would violate the law and jeopardize the CIA's hopes to avoid a showdown with Congress over cutting off all money for covert activities in this hemisphere.

Long, chairman of the foreign operations subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee, refused direct comment.

A Honduran who told the New York Times in April that he was

involved in planning covert U.S. activities disclosed that the United States was providing underwater equipment and explosives to Argentine-trained sabotage teams that had infiltrated Nicaragua early this year.

The teams reportedly have had limited success in blowing up facilities in Puerto Cabezas. As a prelude to seizing the port, the Honduran defector reported, a team of Miskito Indians trained as frogmen had sabotaged some harbor installations in January.

The Honduran also disclosed that the Miskitos, who have turned strongly anti-Sandinista and claim that the Nicaraguan government has tried to exterminate them, were trained in underwater demolition at Vivorillo Island off the east coast of Honduras.

He said the Miskitos had been trained by the Argentines and the equipment and explosives used for the sabotage operation were supplied by the United States. The CIA and the Pentagon refused comment on the alleged operation.

U.S. officials disclosed in recent interviews that contrary to reports at the time, Argentina, after it invaded the Falkland Islands, did not withdraw many of its military advisers from Honduras, where it was training insurgents in guerrilla warfare.

The House Intelligence Committee said in May:

"There has been a hidden pro-

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